



STATE OF IOWA

THOMAS J. VILSACK, GOVERNOR
SALLY J. PEDERSON, LT. GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
JUDY A. JEFFREY, DIRECTOR

To: Senator Grassley
Senator Harkin
Representative Boswell
Representative King
Representative Latham
Representative Leach
Representative Nussle

From: Judy Jeffrey, Director, Iowa Department of Education

Subject: Impact of federal education program funding levels for FY2006

Date: February 20, 2006

On behalf of Iowa's schools and students, I thank you for your efforts to sustain and enhance federal funding for education over the past year. The final federal FY2006 education appropriations levels, however, will have a significant negative impact on Iowa's schools, parents, and students. As you know, with federal requirements increasing and expectations for accountability pushing us toward needed changes that require funds for retraining teachers and supporting students with a variety of learning needs, our schools are relying more and more on federal resources to supplement the general education program.

Recent shifts in designated uses for funds or the removal of funds will have a direct impact on local school programs and the children served by those programs. The approved budget brings less federal education funding to Iowa at a time when accountability measures are identifying an increased need for resources to 1) help our schools in need of improvement, 2) assist our teachers as they continue to work to improve instructional skills, and 3) provide supports for our neediest student populations. Compounding the funding decreases are the shifts in the ways those funds can be used and the types of programs they support.

Changes to Federal Education Funding Streams					
Program	FY05 (actual)	FY06 (estimated)	Proposed FY07	Change 06-07	Change 05-07
NCLB	122,818,600	119,028,365	121,289,485	+1.9%	-1.2%
Title I	64,154,474	64,827,773	63,921,729	-1.4%	-0.4%
IDEA	112,698,734	112,541,643	113,498,728	+0.85%	+0.71%
IDEA Fed Cont	N/A	18.6%	17.8%	-0.8%	N/A
Even Start	1,014,181	445,400	0	-100%	-100%
Ed. Technology Grants	2,400,020	1,317,349	0	-100%	-100%
Safe/Drug Free Schools	3,407,261	2,683,536	0	-100%	-100%
Vocational Education	12,864,372	12,732,272	0	-100%	-100%
Tech-Prep	1,245,235	1,245,235	0	-100%	-100%

Grimes State Office Building - Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0146

PHONE (515) 281-5294 FAX (515) 242-5988

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Helping Communities Meet the Learning Needs of All Their Children and Adults

Changes to Federal Education Funding Streams					
Program	FY05 (actual)	FY06 (estimated)	Proposed FY07	Change 06-07	Change 05-07
Title V – Innovative Grants	1,771,915	884,171	884,171	-50.1%	-50.1%
Total	249,626,941	245,547,515	234,788,213	-4.4%	-5.9%

NOTE: The \$6.3 million Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant, also slated for elimination, would be in addition to the totals in the table above.

While the overall shift in the above funds shows a loss, the real story is told by the designated uses of the proposed new funds and the impact on the programs currently supported by those funding categories that are significantly reduced. What follows is additional detail describing the effects of the proposed levels of funding on students, schools, and families.

IDEA

The President's FY2007 budget request for IDEA would increase Iowa's appropriation approximately \$1 million over FY2006 after Iowa experienced a \$200,000 decrease from FY2005 to FY2006. The FY2006 IDEA spending bill included a one percent across-the-board cut. The reauthorization of IDEA in 2004 made two substantial revisions to IDEA 97. The first was to establish a "glide path" that would enable the federal government to meet the "40% of excess costs for special education" goal that has been in the special education federal statute since its inception in 1975. The decrease experienced this year as well as the modest increase proposed for the following year will actually translate into "losing ground" on this goal. The federal contribution will decline from 18.6% in FY2005 to 17.8% in FY2006 and continue to drop in FY2007.

Also, the recent relatively small decrease has not allowed Iowa to benefit from the change in IDEA that gave states a two-year window of opportunity to substantially increase the amount of state set-aside dollars for administration and state-level activities. These activities include administrative funds to support staff at the Department of Education and funds to support other state-level activities including the Parent-Educator Connection, professional development, and technical assistance to Area Education Agencies and local education agencies. This lost opportunity negatively affects the Department's ability to provide professional development and technical assistance to schools for the implementation and monitoring of IDEA 04.

Even Start

Last year, Iowa's nine Even Start sites served 244 low-income families, including 318 children and 257 adults. Even Start provides a comprehensive family literacy program to low-income families to increase their education and parenting skills. The primary effect of the proposed elimination of Even Start would be in lost opportunities for families to be served. For most programs, the number of families, children, and parents served would be halved in FY2006 and eliminated in FY2007.

Why is this important? In Iowa City, for example, Even Start staff noticed one parent had trouble seeing the chalkboard. They took the mom for a vision exam (and provided translation), and obtained funding for the mom to purchase eyeglasses. Now, the mom reads to her children, can see the chalkboard, and is making significant progress in her GED studies; with Even Start supports, she is expected to complete her GED this May.

In Estherville, the Even Start preschool, which was recently accredited through NAEYC, serves mainly English Language Learners. Due to reduced funding, they will have to cut an afternoon session, reducing children served and letting a valuable community resource lay dormant, despite

seeing a dramatic increase in skill levels of kindergartners over the past few years because of their early exposure to English language instruction through Even Start.

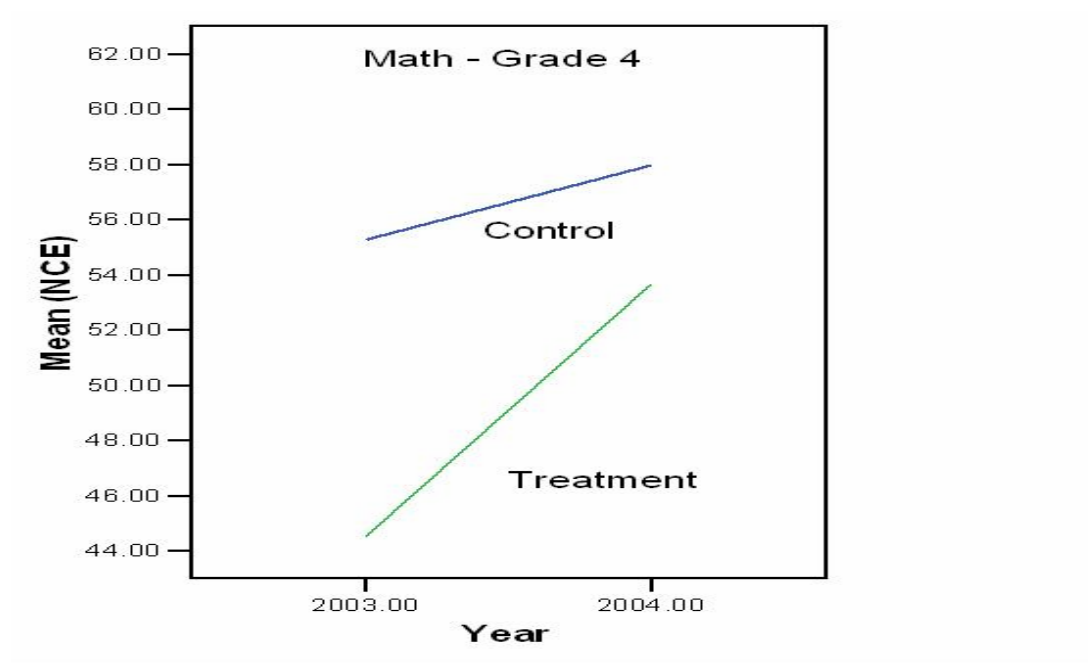
In some areas, such as Fort Dodge, Storm Lake and Decatur County (where adult illiteracy levels are among the highest in the state), reduced grants would mean eliminating transportation services and effectively barring families from participation.

Educational Technology Grants

These funds have been a primary means to support quality professional development in reading and mathematics through the integration of instructional technologies. All of Iowa's schools districts and area education agencies will be impacted by the reductions and potential loss of this funding. Currently, there are 13 grants under this program: nine to AEA-wide consortia and four to individual school districts. These consortia have targeted specific professional development interventions in the following areas: elementary reading (4), elementary math (2), middle school reading (2), and middle school math (3).

There are no other dollars earmarked for technology in education at either the state or federal level (excluding E-rate funds that pay for Internet and telecommunications access). The elimination of these funds will significantly disrupt improving instructional technology in Iowa's classrooms. These reductions come at a time when the initial reports of the impact of the Education Technology grants are encouraging and progress is being made in reading and mathematics achievement.

One example of this impact shows fourth grade math total scores. A control group research design was used to compare schools not accessing Education Technology grant training compared to those that were accessing the support:



In Iowa, the concept of professional development and the system of delivery has undergone drastic change since 2000. In the past, professional development was driven by individual teacher initiative or by school districts that contracted independent consultants for services. As a part of the change in the delivery of professional development staff training, each AEA now provides a professional development team made up of media specialists, subject matter specialists, and professional development specialists to each school district in Iowa. These professional development teams are responsible for initiating and providing professional development for consortiums participating in the Enhancing Education through Technology (E2T2) initiative and the Evaluation of State Educational Technology Programs (ESETP).

Currently, about 25,000 students are the direct beneficiaries of these activities but as these activities improve teacher skills, all public school students in the state could eventually be impacted.

Safe/Drug Free Schools

All of Iowa's districts (365) currently receive funds from this program. Learning Supports is an initiative intended to help school districts remove barriers to learning through the implementation of effective policy and programs designed to address quality learning environments. The Safe/Drug Free funding has supported the implementation of Learning Supports. A specific emphasis in Iowa has been the reduction of bullying, harassment, and hazing.

Of the 365 school districts that drew down these funds in the 2004-05 school year, 111 were eligible (due to size) for Reap-Flex funding. These schools could spend their SDFSC allocation in other Title programs. One of the most common expenditures was a transfer of funds to support Title I **reading** programs.

Of the remaining 254 districts, 33 took advantage of the option to transfer up to 50% of their SDFSC funding into professional development. Most of these districts used this funding to support **Teacher Quality** programs to **improve instruction** and support increased achievement in Iowa schools. Reducing funding to these schools will cripple district efforts to support efforts to keep students engaged in school and improving their performance.

The remainder of the SDFSC funding for these 33 districts as well as the funding for the remaining 221 districts in the state support programs, services, and strategies to maintain and improve safe and supportive learning environments and to decrease substance abuse. A substantial portion of this funding supports character development and civic education programs – two programs not reduced in this budget (Title IV B). In fact, these two budget items in the President's budget require research-based design and evaluation that is beyond the capacity of almost all schools in Iowa to meet, and therefore, inaccessible to our districts. The SDFSC funding is the only way that Iowa schools will have the capacity to continue to support character education, civic education, anti-bullying efforts, substance abuse prevention, and to support non-violent learning environments.

Perkins Vocational Education, Tech Prep Grants, and Section 118 funding

The purpose of this Act is to develop more fully the academic, vocational, and technical skills of secondary and post-secondary students who elect to enroll in vocational and technical education programs offered by comprehensive high schools and community colleges. Funding received through this Act is distributed by formula to all of Iowa's local education agencies and community colleges. Recipients use these funds to implement new or improve existing programs in response to emerging needs in the region or state. The current federal budget would provide level funding for Title I and II of the Act. The proposed FY2007 budget, however, proposes to eliminate federal vocational education funding including funding for Section 118 (Career and Occupational Resources) and for Tech Prep State Grants.

Perkins Vocational Education Act

During FY 2006, Iowa received \$12,864,372 through the Carl D. Perkins Act. Eighty-five percent of this funding was awarded to sub-recipients (367 K-12 Districts and 15 Community Colleges). These funds are used by the local education agencies to:

- 1) improve or support programs that strengthen the academic, vocational, and technical skills of students;
- 2) provide students with experience and an understanding of all aspects of the industry that they are preparing to enter;
- 3) improve the use of technology;
- 4) provide professional development programs to teachers, counselors, and administrators;
- 5) link secondary and post secondary programs, including apprenticeship programs;
- 6) involve parents, businesses, and labor organizations in the design, implementation, and evaluation;

- 7) provide career guidance and academic counsel to students;
- 8) assist in the development of local education and business partnerships; and
- 9) lease, purchase, upgrade, or adaptation of equipment, including instructional aides.

The balance of the funds pay for costs incurred by the state to administer (5%) the program and for state-wide leadership activities (10%) including state-wide assessment of programs, professional development on research-based teaching skills and the emerging needs, expectations, and methods of industry.

Without the continued federal investment in vocational and technical education, local educational agencies and community colleges would have to fund the efforts to keep the program's content current, and provide supportive services to members of special populations with their existing resources. Since finances are also scarce from state and local sources, the 169,280 secondary age students and the 50,256 post-secondary students served in the 2005-06 school year would have less access to quality vocational and technical education programs. This in turn would have a negative impact on Iowa's preparedness for the global workplace.

Tech-Prep Grants

The elimination of Tech Prep would remove funding that supports secondary/ post-secondary tech prep consortiums. K-12 districts and community colleges would lose the support to jointly plan and develop programs that provide for a seamless transition from high school to community colleges. This is at a time when it is becoming public policy to encourage K-12 districts and community colleges to develop seamless transitions so more students attain educational credentials beyond the high school diploma.

Section 118, Statewide Career Information Systems

The elimination of funding for Section 118 will affect the state by:

- reducing professional development activities addressing the alignment of career components, including standards and benchmarks, for academic and career-technical instructors and 1,314 counselors in school districts and community colleges.
- eliminating the coordination and collaboration on the Career Information Delivery System, IOWA CHOICES, in all secondary public and private Iowa schools - over 400 sites, and potentially reduce access to current, accurate, and relevant information about career and post-secondary education opportunities in Iowa.
- reducing communication about seamless transitions between K-12 and post-secondary institutions on career and educational planning, career information, career pathways, career clusters, special populations' transition into the workforce, college student services at community colleges, work-place learning connections for work-study, and work experience coordination between the schools and business and industry.

Title V – Innovative Programs

Title V is flexible funding that all school districts in Iowa access to:

- enhance teaching and learning and to comply with NCLB expectations. Areas supported through Title V funding include Mathematics, Reading, Science, Fine Arts, Gifted and Talented, Health/Physical Education, At-Risk.
- Implement promising educational reform programs and school improvement programs based on scientifically based research.
- Provide library services and instructional and media materials.
- Iowa districts are aligning Title V funds to the prioritized needs of their local school reform efforts in the areas of professional development, class-size reduction, technology literacy, programs that serve specific student populations and alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. This fund is one of the last available federal resources to support general teacher professional development.

The reduction of federal Title V funding is critical and devastating; however, the situation in Iowa is compounded by a sluggish economy. Over the last four years, schools have been accessing federal funds for specific technical assistance and professional development supports for teachers, parents, and students. These lost funds will translate directly to lost programming for students in all 365 school districts in 2006-07, programming that will not be replaced by the funding shifts to other programs within this proposal.

Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant

The Iowa Department of Education currently is in its first year of a three-year, \$6.3 million Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Education. The grant proposal is a collaborative effort of the Iowa Department of Education, Iowa Board of Educational Examiners, all 15 of Iowa's Community Colleges, all Iowa private four-year institutions, Iowa Regent Universities, and PK-12 school districts. The goals of the grant are:

Goal 1: Strengthen teaching in the content areas.

Goal 2: Improve teaching for diverse populations (i.e. teaching English language learners).

Goal 3: Provide for reform and improvement through rigorous evaluation of teacher education candidates and analysis of program performance data, resulting in more effective teacher education programs.

Goal 4: Meet future challenges through collaboration.

Several of the major statewide initiatives funded by this grant are already in progress, including arrangements for the ELL Summer Academies for higher education faculty and student teacher teams, work for the electronic feedback loop that collects data on new teachers, the creation of middle school models that focus on reading, math and science, the development of a cross-articulation process that will ensure better transition for students between and among 2- and 4-year colleges and universities, and the development of student performance assessment systems for all 4-year colleges and universities with teacher preparation programs. If funding is cut for this grant, the entire teacher preparation system in Iowa will suffer negative effects. All 31 teacher preparation institutions and all 15 community colleges will incur costs required to complete the projects they have begun and momentum for the work of the entire project will be lost.

Summary

We clearly need your help. Even though this federal funding is a small part of local district and community college budgets, the funds support essential functions that provide student opportunities for learning and improved teaching. The proposed reduction and/or complete loss of these federal funds will result in lost opportunities. This reduction, however, can be reversed. I hope you can see the impact on Iowa schools and students from the above descriptions. I am encouraging you to continue support in a way that allows Iowa to maintain one of the premier educational systems in the country. If you have any questions or concerns, my staff and I are always ready to help.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Judy Jeffrey
Director
Iowa Department of Education

Cc: DE Senior Staff
Kris Bell